## **Councilmember Kathy Lambert**

# County Update

Happy Holidays!

It is an honor to be serving you on the King County Council. As you may have noted by channel surfing on CTV, things have really changed this year with a bipartisan effort to get things done. The proof of the strong working relationship is seen in the budget vote of 12 to 1 with only agreed upon amendments - many of them technical in nature - on the last day. I had the pleasure of being a member of the negotiating team for the budget. There were many tough decisions, but we kept the focus of making county government more accountable and efficient in providing county services.

It is amazing to learn about ALL the various important services that the county provides such as sheriff, courts, jails, roads, public health, parks and recreational facilities, land use and zoning and the list goes on.....

There are three issues that I would like to highlight for you in this newsletter - the overview of the budget, the creation of a new commission to evaluate King County government, and a review of the election process. I hope this information is helpful to you.



During the November 5 election process, I received a great number of phone calls from rightfully concerned citizens, including my son at college, about their ballots. I had several meetings with the director of the elections department and observed during election night as the ballots were brought back and processed. As you may have heard on the news or read in the newspapers much of the early information about the late ballots was incorrect.

On December 9<sup>th</sup> a public briefing was held on this issue. Bob Roegner, the Director of the King County Elections Department, testified and answered questions on activities that took place on Election Day. I believe that there are many more questions that need to be answered and have signed a letter with several other council members requesting Secretary of State Sam Reed to conduct a full investigation. I have spoken with the Secretary of State and his staff on this issue. As the Seattle Times reported, he will honor our request.

It is very important that we get to the bottom of this issue. Our democracy strongly relies on a fairly and efficiently run elections process, and I am thankful for the many phone calls from District Three residents who had not yet received their ballot. I very strongly believe that every vote counts and want you to know that the county council is working hard to restore your confidence in the election process.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (206)296-1003 or send me an email at: kathy.lambert@metrokc.gov.Thank you very much.

I hope you and your families have a safe and Happy New Year!

Sincerely



## KING COUNTY BUDGET

## Lambert helps negotiate budget

In a process claimed to be the most efficient in recent memory, the Metropolitan King County Council successfully adopted a 2003 King County Budget that totals \$3.1 Billion, with a general fund of \$489 million for criminal justice, human services and other critical needs for which there are no dedicated revenues. The final vote was 12 to 1.

Much of the county's expenditures are required by state law, county ordinance, or public vote. The county council has operational control of only 17% of the entire budget.

The spending plan reduces the size and role of county government. Health and human service programs that faced significant cuts had about \$3.3 million of their funding restored by the council with some one-time-only savings and with part of a \$6.1 million cut to adult detention.

The budget closes the structural gap of \$53 million next year between revenues and expenses, in part through a number of policy initiatives that include:

Adoption of a new entrepreneurial blueprint for county parks and pools that lie inside incorporated cities. This plan will transfer their ownership to those cities and organizations that are willing to operate and maintain them. The council budget focuses funding on the maintenance and operation of such

changes have allowed us to make many needed changes in our budget." ~ Kathy Lambert

aintenance and operation of such

"The council has reprioritized how we deal with jail inmates.

Many people that are in jail are

awaiting trial and not danger-

ous criminals. Under the new

judge and sent to treatment, home detention, day reporting

to monitor behavior, or put in

jail as needed. This will allow us

to be proactive in getting to the

what will best change behavior

root of the problem, targeting

and hopefully reducing or

breaking the revolving door

cycle at the county jail. These

plan they will be evaluated by a



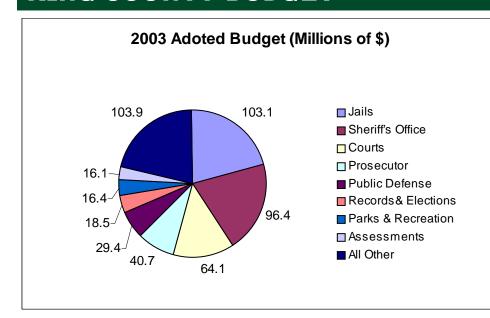
Councilmembers hold a press conference after passing the King County 2003 budget. From left to right are Councilmembers; Dow Constantine, Kathy Lambert, Larry Phillips, and Jane Hague.

regional facilities as Marymoor Park and the King County Aquatic Center, and on parks and pools in the unincorporated areas where King County is the only local government.

- · Creation of a new Cultural Development Authority of King County that moves administration of arts and cultural resources programs out of the general fund to a more stable funding base.
- · Adoption of the Adult Justice Operational Master Plan (AJOMP) which helps free up jail space and save money through such alternatives as drug court, mental health court and driver relicensing programs. Relocating jail procedures enabled budget writers to hold 2003 spending for adult detention at 2002 levels, and reinvest the savings in programs under the AJOMP that that help reduce involvement in the criminal justice system while at the same time preserving public safety. Without reductions in operational costs, by 2007 the costs of the county's criminal justice system would entirely consume the general fund.

While efficiently managing the crisis in the general fund for 2003, the Council still confronts projected shortfalls of \$24 million in both 2004 and 2005, due to a combination of a deepening recession, an ever-shrinking tax base due to the pace of annexations and incorporations, reductions in state revenue, unfunded state and federal mandates, voter initiatives, and state laws that limit county revenues. So there is more work to be done...

#### KING COUNTY BUDGET



2003 Adopted Budget	(Millions of \$)
Jails	103.1
Sheriff's Office	96.4
Courts	64.1
Prosecutor	40.7
Public Defense	29.4
Records & Elections	18.5

16.4

16.1

All Other 103.9 **TOTAL:** 488.6

Parks & Recreation

Assessments

#### **NEW COMMISSION TO ASSESS KING COUNTY**

#### Lambert and Patterson sponsor Commission on Governance

"All aspects of the county government will be

examined by the Commission on Governance. I

King County Councilmembers Kathy Lambert and Julia Patterson sponsored an ordinance that establishes a Commission on Governance, a nine-member body to be comprised of law enforcement, academic, labor, and business leaders that will examine the structure and operations of King County government. The ordinance was approved by the Metropolitan King County Council on November 25th, 2002.

The purpose of the commission is to study and assess the

current structure of King County government and make recommendations to the executive and the council on a number of issues including:

**Examining county** procedures to increase efficiency

- Examining current expense (general fund) expenditures.
- Examining the county's revenue structure.
- Deciding if there should be a dedicated revenue source for the criminal justice system, including funding

for human services programs that reduce recidivism.

- Determining if elected county officials should be partisan or non-partisan.
- Determining if county officials should be elected or appointed.
- Evaluating the size and structure of King County government, including all elective county offices, and the

number of councilmembers and their staff.

No elected official or candidate for office may serve on the commission. The nine commission the County Executive, the Chair of the Council, the

have made a list of my concerns and suggestions. I am eager to have the commission's expertise and input as we partner to restore public trust in members will be selected by county government." ~ Kathy Lambert Prosecuting Attorney and the Presiding Judge of Superior Court. The Executive will

then officially appoint the commission members, subject to confirmation by the council. (The County Executive is required by county charter to appoint commission members.) Commission members will issue a final report and present their recommendations to the County Council by March 31, 2004.

● ● ● ● ● Page 3 ● Councilmember Kathy Lambert

#### **KATHY LAMBERT**

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#### **YOUR COMMENTS ARE NEEDED!**

King County is revising its Critical Areas and Stormwater regulations to comply with state and federal laws and with King Comprehensive Plan policies. The critical areas included in the changes are: wetlands, flood hazard areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and geologically hazardous areas.

You are invited to the public input sessions:

CARNATION, Tolt Middle School 6:30 – 9:30 p.m., January 9 3740 Tolt Avenue

ISSAQUAH, Issaquah High School 6:30 – 9:30, January 14 700 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE

#### For more information or to comment:

Critical Areas/ Stormwater Ordinance 201 So. Jackson St., Ste. 600 Seattle, WA 98104 E-mail: CAO-StormwaterUpdate@metrokc.gov Telephone: 206-205-3888, toll free 1-866-434-0318

web: http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/cao/

Please submit comments by February 7, 2003